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DE RUEHBO #4730 1801600
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6695
INFO RUEHHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 1289
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 7612
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 9123
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUN 8800
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 5197
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0423
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1051
RUEHQQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 5795
RHMFIISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RUEAWJC/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BOGOTA 004730

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINR PREF PREL PTER CO

SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: FARC ASSASSINATES ELEVEN COLOMBIAN HOSTAGES

REF: A. BOGOTA 1224

1B. BOGOTA 3651

1C. BOGOTA 4716 REPLACED BY CURRENT CABLE

11. Summary. The FARC assassinated eleven Colombian state assemblymen on June 18, according to a FARC communique issued June 28. The FARC claimed the hostages were killed in a crossfire during a military attack. President Uribe condemned the FARC for the murders, and he confirmed that GOC did not attempt a rescue. The president also said the GOC would consult with family members prior to launching rescue attempts, and that the GOC would also consult with the USG prior to any rescue attempt of three U.S. citizens held by the FARC. Uribe reiterated the GOC will not accept a "despeje" with the FARC, but said that a planned June 29 meeting of the Swiss, French and Spaniards to discuss a humanitarian accord should go forward. End summary.

12. On June 28, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced in a communique through its unofficial portal ANNCOL that eleven of twelve assemblymen from the department of Valle de Cauca taken captive in April 2002, were killed on June 18, in a cross fire when an unidentified military group attacked their camp. Assemblyman Sigifredo Lopez reportedly survived because he was detained in a different location.

13. President Alvaro Uribe held an emergency security council meeting the morning of June 28, announcing that the FARC had assassinated the hostages. Uribe confirmed that no military rescue operation had taken place when the hostages were killed. He cited numerous cases in which the FARC had executed hostages and later justified the executions with the false excuse of a rescue/crossfire. Uribe stated the GOC would, in all cases, consult with hostage family members prior to any rescue attempt--citing the case of Foreign Minister Fernando Araujo, freed from the FARC in a military rescue attempt in January (Ref A)--and said no consultation in this case had occurred because there had been no rescue attempt. Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos provided details for the media on all military operations around the date of the killings in the southwest of Colombia; none matched the FARC description of events.

¶4. Uribe also confirmed that he would consult with the USG prior to launching any rescue attempt for Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell and Thomas Howes (Ref B) (or with the French Government in the case of Ingrid Betancourt). Uribe added that the GOC had not determined the location of the AMCIT hostages or Betancourt. The president asked the international community to condemn the FARC for the killings and to provide forensic assistance to find the remains of the assassinated hostages and investigate the facts surrounding their killings.

¶5. Finally, Uribe reiterated that the GOC "will not accept a zone of despeje" or free members of the FARC who intend to return to FARC ranks. Still he said the French, Swiss, and Spanish should proceed with a planned meeting among themselves on June 29 in Geneva to discuss a possible humanitarian accord to free remaining hostages. He noted that with the GOC's authorization, the three countries had met with FARC spokesman Raul Reyes during the third week of June.

¶6. President Uribe's office asked the Embassy to provide a Spanish version of the Department spokesman's press statement to be posted on the presidency's web site. We are translating the guidance which we understand was used by the Department on June 28.

Drucker